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THE AMERICAN NOVEL--ITS MERITS AND ITS DEFECTS



George Barr Mc Cutcheon

NY SUCCESSFUL MERICAN AUTHORS GIVE THEIR VIEWS Meredith Nicholson, who recently wrote exhaustively in the holding of the mirror up to nature, but nevertheless we do not like to be fooled all the time. And no one is quicker than an American to "get down to brass tacks" when he realizes that he must come to it. Realism is the natural medium through which a democracy may "regulater" (to borrow a term from the screen drama) its changing emotions, its hopes and failures. We are willing to take our recreations in imaginary kingdoms, but we are blessed with a healthy curiosity as to what really is happening among our teeming millions, and are not so blind as our foreign critics and the croakers at home would have us think as to what we do and feel and MANY SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN AUTHORS

Mr. Meredith Nicholson, who recently wrote exhaustively in the Atlantic Monthly" on the subject of the American novel, contributes here some views which are used as a basis of comment. On this and a succeeding page many prominent American authors express their opinions in regard to our contemporary fiction.

Democracy is not so bad as its novels, at matter, is a constitutional The taste of many an Amerhas been debased by English ficton. At the risk of appearing ungracious I fling in Mr. Garnett's teeth an armful of the writings of Hall Caine, Mrs. Barclay and Marie Corelli. The slightest regard for the literary standards of a young and struggling republic should receive the mother country to keep her. rount the mother country to keep her rash at home. It is our most grievous in that we have merely begun to manue our own rubbish, in a commendpirit of building up home indus-In my youth I was prone to in-in pirated reprints of most enales of adorable curates' nieces They were duke's daugh-

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think as to what we do and feel and believe. But the realists must play the gume straight. They must paint the wart on the sitter's nose—even though he refuse to pay for the portrait! Half hearted dallying and sidling and com-

of an adoring circle; another who "never revises" arouses even more poignant despair. The laborious Baizac tearing his proofs to pieces seems only a dingy and pitable figure. Nobody knows the difference and what's a well turned sentence more or less? I saw recently a newspaper editorial commenting derisely on a novelist's confession that he was capable of only a thousand words a day, the point being that the average newspaper writer triples this output without fatigue. Newcomers into the field can hardly fail to be impressed by these rumors of novels knocked off in a month or three months, for which astonishing sums have been paid by generous magazine editors. We shall have better fiction as soon as ambitious witters realize that novel writing is a high calling and that success is to be won only by those who are willing to serve seven and yet seven other years in the hope of winning "the crown of time."

In his happy characterization of Turgenieff and his relation to the

things more entertaining than seeing other people mass.acred. But I had all along the feeling that Mr. Wister was really giving himself the worst of it and that he would have moments that the vast popularity of a medicerity does not damn the artistic status of a period; for the medicere most always have their medicere food. OF "BACKGROUND" THE MOVIES; LACK OF "BACKGROUND" THE MOVIES; LACK OF "BACKGROUND" The sale of the cuckoo fleeighns, which cratistic status of a period; for the medicere must always have their medicere food. In Sin. keepeare's day and a seed on recent sensational crimes. They had the bear pits and their vaudeville far inferior to our moving picture shows. In all of England's glorious periods the bear pits and their vaudeville far inferior to our moving picture shows. In all of England's glorious periods the bear pits and their vaudeville far inferior to our moving picture shows. There is no space or time here to make a list of these pool, up table the bear to make a list of these pool, up table history to get the truth established once for all in his brain that the populace wants popular stuff. And one does not need much philosophy to real in the same that the populace wants popular stuff. And one does not need much philosophy to restrict the same striped of the same of their own day were fourishing too. The same of the cuckoo fleighns, we only free departed from them. Another far was a large striped of the same and known changes of the same and worse who are relieved to the same striped of the same and the same of the same and the same and worse who are string started the same with the same of the same and the same of the same a things more entertaining than seeing other people mastacred. But I had all along the feeling that THE MAGAZINES;